

Virginia Cave Board

November 23, 2002

The Virginia Cave Board met in a regular business session on November 23, 2002 at the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Soil and Water Conservation Office in Staunton, Virginia. Chairman Barbara Moss called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present

Mr. Bob Barns
Dr. David Culver
Ms. Kathy Harbury (Department of Historic Resources)
Dr. John Holsinger
Mr. Bill Keith
Ms. Barbara L. Moss
Mr. Gary Moss (proxy for Mr. Joe Davis)
Mr. Larry Smith (proxy for Ms. Karen M. Kasting)
Ms. Carol Zokaite

Members Absent

Dr. Kurt Buhlmann
Mr. Joe Davis
Ms. Karen M. Kastning
Mr. Roy Powers

Non-members Present

Ms. Patti Barns
Mr. Braven Beaty
Mr. Charles Maus
Ms. Judy Molnar
Mr. Joey Fagan (Secretary of the Virginia Cave Board)
Mr. Wil Orndorff
Miss Travertine Orndorff
Miss Neomi Orndorff

2. Introduction and Announcements

Chairman Barbara Moss welcomed members of the Virginia Cave Board and guests.

3. Minutes

- The minutes of the September 14, 2002 meeting were accepted by the Board by acclamation.

4. Treasurers Report

- Chairman Moss presented the Treasurer's report as submitted Treasurer Karen Kastning. The Treasurers Report was accepted by the Board by acclamation.

Old Business

5. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

- Barbara Moss is the new chairman of the Education Committee.
- Cave Appreciation Week 2002 – report given by Carol Zokaites:

Educational Packets were sent to 89 teachers or schools, 152 to the commercial caves, ten to cavers doing outreach (251 total packets sent).

2000 Cave Appreciation Posters were printed. Thank you letters and complimentary posters were sent to contributors.

This year work with DCR Public Relations office started in July, need to start in March next year.

This year 6000 brochures and about 3000 teacher letters were printed. Fewer brochures and letters will be required if Cave Appreciation Week is publicized using the Internet. Next year both postal mail and E-mail can be utilized if funds are available.

- Patti Barns reported she organized a school trip to Grand Caverns for her students.
- The Board decided the theme for the 2003 Cave Appreciation Week will be "Karst Groundwater Protection"
- For the 2003 Cave Appreciation Week tasks will be coordinated as follows:

Public Relations –Virginia Karst Program and Carol Zokaites
Cave Appreciation Week Poster – Wil Orndorff
Education Packet Inserts – Barbara Moss

B. Environmental Response Committee

- The Nature Conservancy involvement with Unthanks Cave will be discussed under New Business.

C. Sinkhole Protection Committee

- Committee Chairman Bill Keith reported that Bob Barns, Joey Fagan, John Holsinger, Bill Keith, Gary Moss, Larry Smith, and Carol Zokaites met to define the objectives of this new committee. The committee will work to develop a list of goals and issues and strategies for the protection of sinkholes and groundwater in karst areas.

6. Project Underground Report

- Carol Zokaites reported recent workshops by Project Underground have served 32 different teachers.

7. Virginia Karst Program

- Wil Orndorff reported on selected activities of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Natural Heritage Karst Program.

Work to delineate Conservation Site Boundaries around Virginia's significant caves.

Environmental Review projects including: CPV Warren Project, Cliff Mountain Pipeline, Natural Tunnel State Park, Patriot Pipeline, Greenbrier Pipeline.

Work on study of karst hydrology of Mossy Creek in Augusta, County in support of TMDL development by Virginia Tech.

8. State Parks and Natural Areas Bond

- Larry Smith reported that the citizens of Virginia approved the Parks and Natural Areas General Obligation Bond with 69% of the voters favoring the bond. Of the \$119 million provided by issuance of the bond, \$13.2 million will be available for acquisition of new Natural Area Preserves and additions to existing Preserves.

Acquisition of biologically significant caves is one priority for acquisition of one or two new Natural Area Preserves. Geographical distribution and others types of significance are additional factors being considered. The Division of Natural Heritage is seeking suggestions from members of the Virginia Cave Board regarding caves to be considered as Natural Area Preserve acquisition candidates.

9. Grand Caverns Update

- Larry Smith reported on the potential of the Commonwealth of Virginia acquiring ownership of Grand Caverns in Augusta County. Mr. Smith noted that the state is not likely to take action soon. Kathy Harbury provided some information about the process of National Registry Nomination for historic resources that may have application to Grand Caverns.

10. Letter to Stan Campbell

- The Virginia Cave Board will send a letter referring to environmental problems with a site in Russell County.

11. Bone Cave Status

- Native American remains removed from Bone Cave in Lee County were interred at a site in Amherst County on land owned by the Monacan Indian Nation.

12. Upper Tennessee River Roundtable grant opportunity

- The Virginia Cave Board wrote a letter of support for the Upper Tennessee River Watershed Initiative Grant Proposal being submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable.

New Business

13. Sinkhole Legislation

- The Sinkhole Protection Committee will study the possibility of developing sinkhole and groundwater protection legislation as part of their workload.

14. Cave Biodiversity Survey and Inventory Proposal

- A meeting with representatives from the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage, The Nature Conservancy, and selected biologists recently met in Richmond, Virginia to discuss Cave Biodiversity Survey and Inventory strategies and a possible funding source through a grant being applied for by American University from the National Science Foundation.

Mr. Bill Keith moved: The Virginia Cave Board supports the grant application of American University for funding of the Cave Biodiversity Survey and Inventory Project by the National Science Foundation.
Mr. Bob Barns seconded.

VOTE:
 In Favor: Rest
 Abstained: Culver

15. Youth Conservation Camp Caving Experience

Ms. Carol Zokaites moved: The Virginia Cave Board will write a letter to the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts to express concern about conservation and safety practices by the Youth Conservation Camp.

Dr. David Culver seconded.

VOTE:
 Unanimously in favor.

16. The Nature Conservancy involvement with Unthanks Cave

Dr. David Culver moved: The Virginia Cave Board will write a letter to The Nature Conservancy expressing concerns with the current management of Unthanks Cave in Lee County. Specific issues of concern include: inadequate monitoring of the site, the ruins of Bacon's store are an attractive nuisance, lack of movement on land acquisition to protect critical habitat including the sinkhole over the Cathedral Passage in Unthanks Cave, and the need for a review of the current management plan.

Mr. Bob Barns seconded.

VOTE:
 Unanimously in favor

Public Comments

17. Drinking Water Protection in Karst Terrain Groundwater Conference

- A conference "Drinking Water Protection in Karst Terrain: A Groundwater Conference and Field Seminar" will be held May 21-22, 2003 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Virginia. For more information on the conference follow this internet link: <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/specevtz.htm>

15. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Virginia Cave Board will be at 1:00 p.m. at Endless Caverns at New Market, Virginia on Saturday, February 22, 2003. Meetings of the Board committees will begin at 11:00 a.m.

An alternate site for the meeting is the Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Soil and Water Conservation Office in Staunton, Virginia.

Meeting dates for additional meetings of the Virginia Cave Board were chosen. Those dates are:

May 31, 2003

September 6, 2003

November 22, 2003

16. Adjournment

Chairman Barbara Moss adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Joey Fagan

Virginia Cave Board Secretary